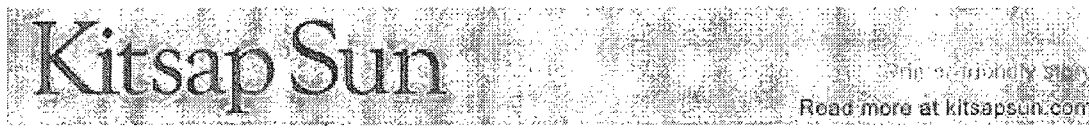


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A Scrapyard Scrap

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USEPA SF



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They're back.

After the last cleanup 1 1/2 years ago, an excavator and 5-yard dump truck nudged through Bill and Natacha Sesko's 5-acre West Bremerton spread, removing things the city of Bremerton deemed shouldn't be there.

Workers from Buckley Recycling Inc., shaking their heads, were back, marking old cars, heavy machinery, old boats and trailers. As they identified what needed to go, Bill Sesko worked an old forklift, loading a trailer with valuables he didn't want gobbled up by the collectors.

The city filed a court order in January in Kitsap County Superior Court to enforce previous orders to clean up the property. In August, city code enforcement officer Janet Lunceford discovered that more stuff had made its way onto the Sesko's Arsenal Way property and their half-acre parcel on Pennsylvania Avenue.

The city notified the Seskos on Thursday that it was going to remove the unwanted items.

After Sesko's appeal was denied April 29, the city moved on the Arsenal Way property with plans to clear it of materials not in compliance with the city's zoning code.

Total all the cleanup projects and the Seskos will owe the city at least \$250,000, said City Attorney Roger Lubovich. Don't expect them to whip out their checkbook. The Seskos say they will file a lawsuit against the city and let the courts decide.

"We're fighting for the principle of it; we're not fighting for the knickknacks," Natacha Sesko said. "I'm going to take them to court. Ever since they started this, from the beginning to now, we have never sued them. But this is wrong. It's going too far."

The squabble began when Bremerton annexed the Arsenal Way property in 1991. The Seskos claimed the property's commercial classification gave them the right to store the material on the site. The city said a special-use permit was required. The issue went to court.

Legal action began in 1997. Rulings consistently supported the city's argument, in Superior Court and Appellate Court. The state Supreme Court refused to intervene on the Sesko's behalf. A final ruling on the cleanup was issued by Kitsap County Superior Court in December 2000.

On Tuesday morning, there was much less stuff on the Arsenal Way site than when contractors last cleaned

it up in December 2001. At that time, they had to weave their way through a morass of old cars, trailers, buses, boats, abandoned appliances, used tires and rusty motors.

Bill Sesko maintains that his stuff is permitted under the zoning for the property, which is commercial. A self-described *inventor and engineer by trade*, Sesko claims he uses the old machinery and material for his projects.

Sesko said he developed all the calculations for a high-pressure blow system for a submarine, a system that brings the underwater vehicle to the surface in emergencies.

Sesko said he planned to use some of the material taken during the first cleanup to develop a land-based system to selectively log forests without clear cutting. An expensive method using helicopters exists, but Sesko said this land-based method would affect forests less and could help those logging areas bear fruit 10 years sooner.

Sesko said he owns more than 100 acres in Kitsap County, including forests, and pays more than \$24,000 a year in property taxes.

"He's a very intelligent guy, and he's a pack rat," said Jeff Dorsey, a friend of Bill Sesko's who owns property in Bremerton. "But this is a commercial industrial site. If you can't keep it here, where can you keep this stuff?"

Bill Sesko believes the city's actions are a sign that people's property rights are gradually being eroded.

"If they can treat a person like this, it's a matter of time before they can treat everybody like this," he said. "It's just going to get progressively worse and worse. And I think the sad thing is the only thing they are leaving for young kids is to go play video games or play in regulated parks.

"The kid that wants to work on a car or do something mechanical, buy a welder from Sears or buy some tools and do something in his yard, he can't do it. ... In a pristine society like this, they won't have anything for them to do. Kids have got to have messes. In fact, if you look at any kid's room, they are not spotless. This is a matter of life. Even Einstein was not very well dressed."

Lunceford said the city took its recent action because the Seskos have consistently failed to comply with the city's zoning regulations, which call for a well-maintained, manicured appearance on the outside of any facility, with nuisance material housed inside a warehouse, away from public sight.

Lunceford said the city is not singling out the Seskos, but merely going after the biggest violators of the city's code.

She pointed out that the city does about 900 code enforcement cases a year, and currently has 130 open complaints. Lunceford said she cites several residents for code enforcement violations each month. Those residents who do not comply in a timely manner are sent to a hearing examiner, where they face the possibility of steep fines.

"I will keep checking on them, although I'm hoping that's the end of the actions we need to take," she said. "It

was a big project. We took on the biggest one so that maybe other people would realize this needed to happen. It was the biggest violator that we saw at the time."

Lunceford said the cleanup should be finished in about two or three days.

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